UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

Thursdays at Noon: Jackman Humanities Institute Artist in Residence, Eve Egoyan

Thursday, March 12th, 2026, at 12:10pm | Walter Hall, 80 Queens Park

PROGRAM

In Stone (world première) (for augmented acoustic piano) 2026

Eve Egoyan (composer and performer)

PROGRAM NOTES

“In Stone” is a new work for augmented acoustic piano reflecting on the Armenian Genocide. I am honoured to have been selected as Artist in Residence at the Jackman Humanities Institute in partnership with the Faculty of Music. “In Stone” has been composed in response to Jackman Humanities Institute’s annual theme "Dystopia and Trust".

From 1915 to 1923, more than 1.5 million Armenians were killed, and half a million survivors were exiled by the Ottoman Empire. The widespread violence, forced deportations, starvation, and mass killings inflicted upon the Armenian population, which still remains unacknowledged by its perpetrators and successor states, became a template for subsequent genocides.

Armenians around the world hold within themselves resonances from this violent past. It is an agonizing reality for Armenians today that the genocide has been interpreted differently by its perpetrators. Living with a distorted past raises the haunting question; who then is entrusted with the truth?

We see across the globe today how very difficult it is to hold onto the truth. Truth is being constantly undermined by darker forces.

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

As part of the Faculty’s commitment to improving Indigenous inclusion, we call upon all members of our community to start/continue their personal journeys towards understanding and acknowledging Indigenous peoples’ histories, truths and cultures.
Visit indigenous.utoronto.ca to learn more.

It is excruciatingly painful for Armenians to have to defend the truth of the Armenian genocide and, in our own lifetime, of ethnic cleansing of Armenians in Artsakh, the Nagorno-Karabakh region now occupied by Azerbaijan.

How can I as an artist express this unspeakable past in this equally distressing present moment?

My ancestors live deeply in my soul. “In Stone” is an attempt to sing their song amidst the plethora of human songs that need to be heard in our time. Nature herself is singing loudly to us through climate change.

“In Stone” attempts to situate nature as a witness to human atrocity.

I share my Armenian story by bringing into this composition fragments from sacred ancient Armenian hymns, pastoral and folkloric songs, and folkloric instruments. The songs and hymns are fragmented to express a feeling of both presence and loss. The meandering feeling of the compositional form echoes the wandering tradition of troubadour storytelling.

On Armenian ancestral lands there remain hand-carved stones including Khachkars, our crosses, and remnants of our stone churches.Through carved inscriptions and images, they literally hold the Armenian language and artistic imagination within them, carrying our words, our prayers, our essence, held “In stone” through time past to time present and into the future.

These stone remains are scattered across the landscape like diasporic Armenians are scattered across the world. Gardens and orchards planted by Armenians on the historical land of Western Armenia remain. Stones, plants, birds, sky, water - they bear witness.

The title of my work, “In Stone”, refers to stones on ancient land holding resonances of the past, the past both human and non-human. I trust in nature as witness and guardian of the truth.

Detailed musical references:

While in Yerevan, Armenia, I recorded folk musicians from the Naregatsi Orchestra performing on folk instruments. Recordings of the wind instruments Shvi (high wooden flute) and Blul (shepherd’s flute) are used to echo the sound of birdsong; Kanun (large, plucked zither instrument) glissandi runs reference water. I also use recordings of Qamancha (bowed string instrument), Duduk (double-reed woodwind instrument), Santur (hammered dulcimer), Tar (lute) and a field recording of Armenian birdsong taken while hiking the Khosrov Forest State Nature Reserve, Armenia, with my family.

Compositional fragments from the following Armenian spiritual and folk music sources:

"Zarmanali e Indz" (“It is Wonderous to me”)
Written by 8th-century Armenian hymnographer and poet Khosrovidukht who is one of the earliest, perhaps even the earliest, women composer, whose music survives to this day.

”Havun Havun" (“To the Bird”- alluding to the Holy Ghost)
One of the oldest known Armenian sacred hymns. Attributed to Grigor Naregatsi from the10th-century.

“Arabkir Bar” (“Arabkir Dance”)
A dance from the city of Arabkir where my orphaned paternal grandfather was born.

“Yeraz” (“Dream”)
The song that my orphaned paternal grandmother sung to my father. “Yeraz” or “Dream” is about a child dreaming they heard their mother’s voice (my grandmother dreaming she heard the voice of her mother who most probably died during a death march through the Syrian Desert overseen by Ottoman authorities).

“Siroun Gagavik” (“Beautiful Patridge”)
An Armenian folksong.

About the augmented acoustic piano:

By using an optical sensor that tracks the movement of piano keys, I am able to reveal sounds I have recorded as well as manipulate a flexible software simulation of an acoustic piano. In this way, I can augment and extend the sound range of the piano while maintaining the physical relationship that exists between piano and pianist.

I consider the instrument I perform on a self-portrait. It holds my ancestral past (recordings of Armenian folkloric instruments), present (a recent field recording and voices of close friends) and an unknown future (explorative use of AI to “speak” the un-speakable by inverting my voice into piano).

I am deeply grateful to the Jackman Humanities Institute and the Faculty of Music for inviting me to go on this personal artistic journey.

BIOGRAPHY

Eve Egoyan is a celebrated Canadian pianist and composer of Armenian heritage. For over forty years Eve has been interpreting works by living composers. Composers who have written for Eve and inflect Eve's present creative practice include Alvin Curran, James Tenney, Jo Kondo, Maria de Alvear, Ann Southam, Linda Catlin Smith, Michael Snow, John Oswald, Chiyoko Szlavnics, Gayle Young, Nicole Lizée, Martin Arnold and Michael Finnissy. Eve has received generous acclaim for thirteen solo discs. The *New Yorker*'s Alex Ross selected Eve's recording of Ann Southam's "Simple Lines of Enquiry" as one of the ten top Classical discs in 2009.

Inspired and emboldened by her rich interpretive journey, for the past fifteen years Eve has been exploring the space between interpretative freedom, improvisation and compositional practice. Taking the piano on a journey (as the piano has taken Eve on a journey), Eve is building a new path for the piano and herself. Using cutting-edge technology to expand the expressive possibilities of the acoustic piano (which can also include the incorporation of real-time visual effects), Eve has dedicated herself to composing for her bespoke enhanced piano which allows her to stay physically and sonically connected to an acoustic piano while pushing the piano beyond the familiar and into the extraordinary.

As an interpreter, Eve has toured nationally and internationally as a soloist in major festivals including: Other Minds Festival, U. S. A.; Huddersfield Festival, U.K.; Sydney Festival, Australia; Klangspuren Festival, Austria; Transart Festival, Italy; Kobe International Modern Music Festival, Japan and the Canadian Festivals: Luminato, Victoriaville, Open Ears, Domaine Forget, Images Festival, Sound Symposium and PuSh Festival. As a composer her works have been featured at Crossroads Festival, Armenia; 21C (Koerner Hall) and Open Ears Festivals, Canada; George Weston Hall (Toronto) and CIRMMT (Montreal) Canada; SARC, Belfast, Ireland; and broadcast on national radio.

Eve's collaborations include: theatre (the URGE collective and SOLO FOR DUET); dance (Dancemakers, Tedd Robinson, Julia Sasso, Peggy Baker); collaborations with visual and new media artists (Gunilla Josephson, Heather Nicol, Lyla Rye, David Rokeby and Christopher Hinton). Her most recent disc "Hopeful Monster" was co-created spontaneously with composer/instrumentalist Mauricio Pauly on live samplers, live processing and rekeyed chromaharp and Eve on acoustic and augmented piano (manipulation of a modelled piano).

Eve received New Chapters funding from the Canada Council in 2017 to develop SOLO FOR DUET. SOLO FOR DUET premiered at the Luminato Festival in Toronto and has toured internationally. Canadian documentary filmmaker Su Rynard has created a feature film, a web documentary and a short film in response to SOLO FOR DUET.

Eve trained in classical repertoire at the Victoria Conservatory of Music; the University of Victoria with Eva Solar-Kinderman; the Banff Centre of Fine Arts with György Sebök;

the Hochschule der Künste in West Berlin with Georg Sava (DAAD); the Royal Academy of Music in London, England, with Hamish Milne (Commonwealth Scholarship). She completed her M.Mus. at the University of Toronto with Patricia Parr (Chalmers Award).

Eve is an elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (FRSC) and an elected Associate of the Royal Academy of Music, London, England (ARAM). She has also been selected as one of 25 top Canadian pianists of all time by the CBC. Other honours include numerous commissions and awards from the Canada Council, Ontario and Toronto Arts Councils, FACTOR, a Muriel Sherrin Award for music performance (Toronto Arts Foundation), a University of Victoria Distinguished Alumna Award, a K.M. Hunter Award, a Chalmers Award and a Chalmers Arts Fellowship. During 2025-2026, Eve is Artist in Residence at the Jackman Humanities Institute in partnership with the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto.

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